

the night could last forever by closethedoor

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti)

Genre: Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, Alternate Universe - No Pennywise (IT), Because of Reasons, Beverly Marsh & Richie Tozier Are Best Friends, Canon Gay Relationship, Cussing, Cute, Dominant Richie Tozier, Eddie Kaspbrak & Richie Tozier Bickering, Eddie Kaspbrak Loves Richie Tozier, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier is Canon, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier-centric, Eventual Smut, Fluff, Gay, Gay Eddie Kaspbrak, Gay Richie Tozier, Happy Ending, I swear I know what I'm doing, Kissing, Light Angst, Losers Club (IT) Friendship, M/M, Minor Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Minor Mike Hanlon/Stanley Uris, Mutual Pining, New York City, Pining, Platonic Beverly Marsh/Richie Tozier, Richie Tozier Loves Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier is a Little Shit, Slow Burn, Soft Eddie Kaspbrak, Stupidity, Submissive Eddie Kaspbrak, bev and richie fake being bf/gf, bless stephen king, but also fuck stephen king, freshman/senior crush, reddie after high school, reddie in high school, richie is four years older because i said so, so much pinning, switch eddie kaspbrak, switch richie tozier, what is canon

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Summary:

Eddie Kaspbrak is 18, moves to New York City right after high school and accidentally meets Richie Tozier, 22, his former high school crush. Most of it is in 2019 when they're adults, but also some scenes are in 2015 when Eddie is 14 and Richie is 18. Very fluffy and cute and will fuck you up in all the right ways.

"In order to lose all romantic feelings for Eddie, he got a girlfriend, drowned himself in excessive amounts of alcohol, and moved to fucking New York, a place where he never expected Eddie to show up. Why would Eds want to live in one of the nastiest places on Earth? That was a question Richie, even science, couldn't answer."

(but we all know fucking why Eddie showed up in New York City. it's because EDWARD KASPBRAK LOVES RICHARD TOZIER AND NO ONE CAN TELL ME ANY DIFFERENT)

title of the fic is from the song "After Hours" by the Velvet Underground. a real bop.

1. how could i ever forget you

Author's Note:

hello everybody! looks like i'm writing fanfiction, how about that.

chapter title is from "The Beat of My Heart" by Foreigner because I love Foreigner and they have great music.

something deep down inside of me always wanted Richie to be a bit older because dom Richie rights. Even though I mostly read and enjoy dom Eddie fics. go figure?

inspired by the many fics i have read this past week anyway, i hope you enjoy and all that sappy shit.

New York City 2019

Eddie always enjoyed how the leaves change color in the autumn. From dazzling green to bright hues of red and orange, the palette of Central Park changed with the season. He was taking a morning stroll through the massive park, enjoying the vibrant landscape. It was a bit chilly, but not cold enough that he couldn't manage it.

He watched little kids run around the park, with doting parents in tow, making sure to tell their children not to play too far off the trail. He saw couples stride through the trees, holding hands, muttering in quiet, calm tones to each other. Huge groups of tourists moved like herds of animals through the garden, snapping pictures here and there. Joggers, moms with strollers, and annoyed New Yorkers taking an impromptu shortcut all passed Eddie too. His mother was wrong. New York was a beautiful city, not a festering disease wasteland. At that moment, Eddie decided he loved New York City, just to spite his mother.

Edward Kaspbrak had just moved to New York City at the innocent

age of 18. It was the biggest decision of his life, but the first decision that actually felt right. Finally, he was away from the clutch of his overbearing mother. His abusive mother. Eddie grabbed his arms and held them tight to his chest, cringing when memories of his mom flooded over him. Derry would always follow Eddie like a shadow, hovering in every dark corner and crevice, ready to launch an attack against him. It was the place where he was born and raised, but it would never be his home. Never.

As Eddie continued to walk through the park, he noticed that the sky was starting to become gray, as dark storm clouds merged together above him. He then wondered if it was going to rain, and he was given quite the immediate answer. A droplet of water splashed against his left cheek, then his shoulder, startling Eddie, and making him realize that he didn't bring an umbrella.

Stupid, he thought, when suddenly, the rain stopped falling on him. But, it was still falling, quite clear from the sidewalk in front of him. He glanced to his right and saw a man looking down at Eddie, holding an umbrella over both their heads.

He was quite handsome, with unruly black hair framing his face, and large glasses sitting atop his nose. The man had on easy blue jeans, a brown overcoat, and wore a navy blue shirt with some abstract logo on it. His chocolate brown eyes made Eddie blush a little bit, but not enough to notice.

The man smiled at Eddie and spoke, his voice rough, but charming. "Why didn't you bring an umbrella, dipshit?"

Eddie was startled at his harsh language and scrunched his face up. "Well, I didn't know it was going to rain today!"

The man stared at him with fake bewilderment. "How the fuck did you not know? It was so fuckin' cloudy this morning! Are you blind or something? You're lucky I'm such a nice fucking guy."

Eddie stared at the man and scowled up at him. "I don't even fucking know you, dude."

The man looked genuinely hurt for a second but quickly covered it up

with a smirk. “Come on Eds, you know me.”

Eddie looked deeply into his eyes, and his identity flashed into Eddie’s brain so violently, it was like someone smacked him in the head. “Richie fucking Tozier.”

It was crazy how much the man in front of him had changed. Eddie had always remembered Richie as lanky and awkward, with huge-ass glasses that made his eyes look ten times bigger. The Richie standing in front of him now looked more refined, like he had a better grip on the world. God knows Trashmouth needed a better outlook on life.

Richie smiled, glad to be recognized. “You know it spaghetti. I knew you would remember. Even if I was a senior and you were a freshman. People just don’t forget *me*. And especially not you, Eds.”

A light chuckle escaped Eddie’s mouth. “Don’t call me that.”

“Okay, bucko.” Richie’s eyes lit up at Eddie’s remark. Some people never change, even in a world that is constantly under development and transformation. Richie was so happy to see that Eddie left his mom, but he wondered what caused Eddie to finally leave the woman who manipulated him for years and years. You don’t just leave Derry without a reason.

“So, what brings you to the big apple?” Richie asked, trying on a persona of nonchalance.

“Oh, uh, well, I just wanted a change of pace from... Derry. And I thought, what better than New York City?” Eddie adjusted his watch nervously and raked his fingers through his hair.

A scoff escaped Richie’s lips. “Trust me, there are better places than New York City. This place is a bit of a shithole.” He locked eyes with Eddie and spoke softly. “But it’s better than Derry.”

Eddie smiled up at Richie, blushing quite feverently. “Y-yeah, it is.”

God, Eddie thought, after all these years and he’s still able to make me weak in the knees, huh? Pull yourself together, Kaspbrak.

But Eddie couldn't help but admire Richie Tozier. He was one of the most popular kids in school, beloved by all for his shitty jokes and his loveable personality. Also, his rager parties that would go on all night. And his hot girlfriend, Beverly Marsh. There had been some rumors that their relationship wasn't actually real, and was only for show. How Eddie wanted that to be true, but he'd accidentally witnessed a couple of their make-out seshes, so he knew that rumor wasn't accurate.

Richie was Eddie's so-called "gay awakening", his first love, although completely one-sided. The senior probably viewed Eddie as his little brother, someone to protect and give advice to about girls. If only Richie knew how Eddie felt, how much he daydreamed about interlocking their hands and going for a stroll around the city at midnight. About running away from Derry with him. About both of them falling in love with each other, and not caring what other people thought or said because it would just be the two of them against the world. The two of them until the end of the line. That's all Eddie's ever wanted. To be with Richie.

Of course, when Richie left Derry after he graduated, to pursue his dream of becoming a stand-up comedian, he did not take Eddie with him. He didn't even say goodbye. So, Eddie shoved all his feelings for Richie deep, deep down, and decided he wouldn't even shed a single tear over the Trashmouth asshole. And that's what he did for the remainder of high school, and what he's still currently doing. But, seeing Richie in Central Park, after what had felt like so many years, had put a crack in the dam. Seeing Richie so grown-up and relaxed made Eddie feel like shit because it confirmed Eddie's theory that Richie didn't need him, and he never would.

Richie noticed the younger man's deep blush but wasn't put off by it. He smirked. The blush confirmed Richie's working theory, which was Edward Kaspbrak had a big, fat crush on Richard Tozier. Richie, of course, noticed all of Eddie's too-long stares and pink cheeks when they were younger.

A senior at the time, he knew confessing his love for a freshman wouldn't be good for his reputation, so Richie also shoved his feelings

deep, deep down. In order to lose all romantic feelings for Eddie, he got a girlfriend, drowned himself in excessive amounts of alcohol, and moved to fucking New York, a place where he never expected Eddie to show up. Why would Eds want to live in one of the nastiest places on Earth? That was a question Richie, even science, couldn't answer.

The taller man adjusted his hand on the umbrella. "So, Eds, do you want to join me for dinner tomorrow night?" Richie asked this very nonchalantly, making sure to hide his growing smile.

Eddie stared blankly up at Richie, blinking his large, doe eyes. Richie loved when he made Eddie speechless, for whatever reason. Whether it was a dumb joke, a weird sexual explanation, or that one time when Richie walked into school wearing a tuxedo for a practical joke. He'd never seen Eddie turn a deeper shade of red when Richie winked at him in the halls while wearing that get-up.

Richie continued. "You know, it'll be a way for us to catch up. For you to tell me how many *ladies* you got during high school." He wiggled his eyebrows up and down.

Rolling his eyes, Eddie responded. "I guess so, fuckface. But if you even say or do one wrong thing, it's *over*."

Richie held up his hand defensively. "I promise I will not say or do anything wrong. I even said that to your mother in my vows when we got married last week, so you know it's true"

The shorter man whacked him in the head.

"OW, hey, what the hell man?"

Eddie cackled at Richie's response, throwing his head back and clutching his stomach.

Fuck, I am in love with this man, Richie thought.

Slipping his hand into Eddie's pocket without permission, Richie grabbed his phone and began to type in his number. He then texted himself on Eddie's phone so Richie could have Eddie's number too. Sure, Richie could've just asked Eddie for his number, but Richie

liked making the younger man uncomfortable. He forgot just how much he enjoyed it as he slipped Eddie's phone back into Eddie's pocket.

Eddie turned his head slightly when Richie did this, purposefully avoiding eye contact with the taller man. He knew how much Richie loved to intimidate and unnerve him. And Eddie couldn't deny that he loved it too.

"So, I'm thinking this cute Italian place at 8 tomorrow night. I'll text you the address." Richie looked down at Eddie expectantly while he proposed this.

The shorter man nodded up at him. "Sounds like a plan."

They stared at each other for a bit, taking in the moment and committing it to memory, both afraid the feeling would be lost if they didn't remember everything. So many words were unspoken between them, more than they realized. Everything they had done had led to this moment in time, to this exchange of words between two people that were meant for each other. Because in every universe, across every plane of existence, Richard Tozier and Eddie Kaspbrak would always find each other. No matter what. That's something the universe knew. And the two men knew it too.

BEEP

BEEP

BE-

The ringing of Richie's phone broke their trance, as he reached into his pocket and answered the call.

"Yeah, what the hell do you want man?" Richie shouted accusatorily.

Eddie heard muffled yelling on the other side, annoyance clear in the person's voice.

"Okay, yeah, y-yeah, I get it, I do. I swear I'll be there soo- *No, man,*

let me handle it.” With a quiet beep, Richie ended the phone call and groaned in frustration.

“I’m sorry Eds, that was my manager.” Richie’s eyes melted as he looked down at Eddie, not wanting to leave him. His original plan was to walk with him a bit more through the park, but the universe decided it had something else in store. Figures. “I need to leave right now. I really wish I could stay bu-”

“It’s fine, Rich, really...it is.” Eddie’s mouth became a straight line as he shoved his hands into his jacket pockets. He glanced up at Richie and gave him a quick smile. “I’ll see you tomorrow, right?”

Richie smiled back down at him. “Right.”

And with that, Richie left holding his Marvel-themed umbrella, through the wet foliage of Central Park and onto the grimy streets of New York City.

Eddie watched Richie leave until he was out of sight, the rain pouring down on him, soaking his hair and jacket. He tilted his head towards the sky and closed his eyes. Derry would always follow him, no matter how much Eddie ignored it. You just can’t run from your own shadow.

2. the gift of memories, an awful curse

Summary for the Chapter:

a flashback of Derry 2015 involving all of the losers except Bev and Stan (don't worry, they come in later). also henry, patrick and their gang are in the chapter too.

WARNING: a bit of homophobic language, light violence, bullying, talking about abuse in a demeaning way, angsty shit

Notes for the Chapter:

chapter title from "Stable Song" by Death Cab for Cutie.

the song actually works really well for reddie.

also this chapter is a 1000 words longer than the last one, ayyy.

i hope you guys enjoy!

Derry 2015

Run.

That was the only word on Eddie's mind as he raced through the town of Derry with Henry Bowers and his gang hot on Eddie's trail. Maybe a few choice curse words too. Each step he made on the bumpy pavement ran a shudder through Eddie's body. He had never felt fear like this in his life, and he was *always* scared. Henry and his friends would kill Eddie, and he knew it. So, he ran.

Before all of that, Eddie was casually sauntering down the steps of Derry High School, finally free from the *awful* first week of school. No teenager in their right mind wanted to be friends with the scrawny,

asthmatic, hypochondriac kid, so Eddie kept to himself. He ate alone at lunch, at the table in the back corner where he could watch cars pass by. Eddie ignored the whispers of other kids as they passed him in the halls. In class, he picked a seat in the middle row towards the back of the classroom. Instead of socializing with peers, he doodled in his notebook, always keeping his head down.

Only one person made any contact with him during that week in school.

“Okay, everyone, *please* flip to page *eight* and work with your partner to complete the following problems.”

Eddie looked up from his notebook to watch the teacher write down a handful of math problems on the whiteboard. He flipped his textbook to the specific page and wrote down the problems, hoping his partner didn't want to work with him. His partner did *not* get that message.

A moment passed as the boy next to Eddie shifted in his seat to face him.

“Hey there, I'm Mike. Mike Hanlon.” A hand stuck itself out towards Eddie, ready to be shaken.

Tediously, Eddie shook the boy's hand and looked him in the eye. He had dark skin and kind eyes, and he wore a soft smile that could calm even the most blood-driven war generals in history.

“I'm Eddie... Kaspbrak.”

Mike gave a warm chuckle. “Well, it's nice to meet you.”

He gave off an aura that reminded Eddie of autumn. Wearing a light red and orange flannel shirt, he looked like he should be working out in the country, and not in a math class under tacky, fluorescent lights. His eyes twinkled like stars out in the middle of nowhere, where planets and galaxies could be seen. Where light pollution had not yet touched the midnight sky.

Eddie smiled back at him, a rare occurrence at school. “Uh... you too.”

The two boys began to work on their math problems together, muttering here and there when they didn't quite understand something. If a random person were to watch them work together, they would've guessed the two boys had been friends for a while. Their fluid motions mirrored each other in the most delicate way. As delicate as two teenagers could be.

"So," Mike began, trying to make small talk with Eddie, "you're a freshman, right?"

Eddie nodded silently.

"Cool. I'm a sophomore."

Eddie didn't say anything and focused on the math problems like they were giving him oxygen to breathe.

"You must be pretty smart to be in a sophomore math class as a freshman. I remember when I was younger, I *sucked* at math. Last summer, I finally got my shit together and got a tutor." Mike turned away and smiled like he was laughing at a joke he just remembered. "Getting a tutor changed my *life*."

Placing his pencil down, Eddie leaned back slightly in his chair and crossed his arms. He looked down at his notebook proudly.

"Damn," he heard Mike say, "you're fast."

Eddie just smiled.

"You need to meet one of my... friends," Mike remarked. "His math skills rival yours."

Eddie looked up at Mike with a surprised face. The older boy almost laughed at the look on his face. "I... I'd like that."

"Yeah, come find me on Monday, at lunch. Some of my friends and I sit behind the bleachers." Mike gave Eddie a genuine smile.

"I-I've... never been invited to anything... at *all*." Eddie's peered down at his shoes, blushing a bit. "Thank you."

Their eyes met as the bell rang. Screeches of chairs and boisterous

voices soon filled the school as thousands of kids filed out of classroom doors and towards the oncoming weekend.

“See ya later Eddie,” he heard Mike say as he got up out of his desk. “Don’t get yourself into any trouble.”

Eddie chuckled. “Wouldn’t dream of it.”

Henry Bowers was leaning against a tree in the front of the school, gripping a pack of cigarettes in his pocket that he stole from his dad. A lighter was in the other pocket of his jeans, snatched from the liquor store a few days prior. He was no stranger to being a menace towards Derry. Henry Bowers drove around town in his shitty Trans-Am acting like he owned *every* square inch of land. In a way, he did, being the son of a respected cop. A cop that abused his son until Henry was nothing but a psychotic, animal-abusing, racist piece of *shit*. Henry might’ve been the bully in this story, but... he was the victim in his own.

Henry Bowers was scanning the crowd of kids leaving school, looking for the perfect target. His eyes fell upon a skinny kid wearing a pink polo, his hands shoved deep in his jacket pockets, eyes darting everywhere like something was about to launch an attack on him. Henry knew this type well. Kids that acted like this were the victims of abuse before they finally broke. Henry loved to be the one who finally tore these kids apart, ripping them at already loose seams.

“Hey, Patrick, look at this one.” Henry nudged the arm of a lanky guy with shaggy, black hair that fell into his eyes.

Patrick squinted as he eyed up the boy Henry was pointing at. He smiled. “Perfect,” he murmured.

Henry let out a breathy cackle, his eyes alive with rage. “Go around and start the car. Bring it to the front.” He started to advance towards the kid and turned his head back to look Patrick in the eye. “We’re gonna run his scrawny ass *down*. ”

Two guys were blocking Eddie's bike, talking in a loud manner and not caring about their immediate surroundings. The one on the left was taller, with bright blue eyes and a relaxed look on his face. He was talking to a guy about the same age as him but bigger, who was clutching a tightly-bound black notebook with brightly colored post-it notes sticking out of it. They were engaged in a deep conversation, one born out of junior depression and a huge lack of sleep.

Eddie didn't want to interact with them, so he looked to the right, glancing across the front lawn of the school. He saw a guy power-walking towards him, wearing a menacing look that screamed "*DANGER*". Eddie didn't know what to make of this, but his brain started producing adrenaline, making him go a *little* haywire.

"MOVE OUT OF THE WAY ASSHOLES! I NEED MY BIKE!" Eddie screamed at the two boys in front of him, who stopped their conversation to gape at him.

"Don't fuckin talk to *us* like that, you little shit. Who do you think you *are* , talking to *us* like *that* ?" The taller boy said, pointing his finger at Eddie.

The guy on the right forced the other's hand down with a pained expression. "Calm down Bill."

"What if I don't *want* to *calm down* , Ben ." The guy on the left huffed.

Ben smiled kindly at Eddie. He must've thought Eddie was a little crazy because of the abrupt yelling, which was fair. "I'm sorry kid, we'll move out of your way."

Eddie noticed the man on his right still moving towards him, reaching for something in his pocket. That's when his fight or flight response kicked in. I'm guessing you know what happened next.

Edward Kaspbrak ran, and fast, and Henry Bowers chased him. A game of cat and mouse had begun.

Eddie was never allowed to go outside and play with the other kids when he was younger. His mother prohibited it, fearing her precious Eddie Bear would scrape his knee and contract an infection or trip

and break his arm. Sonia's mind would think of a million different reasons to keep Eddie inside, safe in her arms. And Eddie never argued with his mom, because she knew what was best for him... right?

Henry let out a few whoops while running after Eddie, before Patrick and his gang came screeching around the corner in his car. The bully hopped in the passenger seat, letting Patrick take the wheel.

"We've got a runner, boys!" Henry yelled, hitting the dashboard as Patrick stepped on the gas pedal, the car lurching forward, speeding after Eddie.

It became harder for Eddie to breathe as he ran harder, zipping down the streets of Derry. Any strangers who saw the chase thought it was some kind of game, and not a chase laced with malice intent.

"YOU BETTER RUN, YOU DIRTY LITTLE FAGGOT!" Henry screamed, gaining on Eddie, who was slowly running out of energy.

He took a sharp left and ran himself into an alley, but before he could back out, his assailants pulled in, blocking the only exit.

The alley was dark and dirty, with leaky pipes sticking out of the neighboring buildings and a thick layer of grime covering the pavement.

Eddie's eyes opened wide, fear pooling deep in his gut. A choked sound escaped his lips as he pushed himself against the back wall.

The passenger door opened, and Henry stepped out, smiling something wicked and cruel. "Nowhere to run now, you little shit." He spat when he talked, seething like a rabid dog.

"P-please, do-don't hurt me." Eddie blubbered, tears already streaming down his face. "Why are you doing this?"

Henry faked sympathy, then smiled. "Because...", he got up close to Eddie's face, "it's fun."

He reached into his pocket and took out a silver switchblade, flicking it open with a metallic *shing!*

The rest of the gang, stepped out of the car, snickering at Eddie's tear-stained, horrified face, shouting insults at him.

"Y-You're a monster," Eddie whispered, searching for remorse in Henry's eyes.

"No," Henry said. "I'm even worse." He took the knife and cut Eddie's left cheek, the younger boy screaming in terror. "I'm human." Henry then kicked the younger boy in the stomach, Eddie curling up into the fetal position. He kicked him again, for good measure.

Blood and tears dripped from Eddie's cheek, falling onto his pink polo and new jeans.

Eddie then heard some scuffling and yelling from the entrance of the alley. It sounded like fighting. *Did the gang turn on each other or something?* Eddie thought, unsure.

"HEY!" Patrick yelled, and the sound of his head against the pavement echoed in the alley.

Henry finally turned around, wondering what the *fuck* was going on, only to be met by a baseball bat square in the jaw and a "GET FUCKED". He crumpled from the hit, slouching against the wall next to Eddie. Blood ran down from his mouth, his eyes rolled back up into his head.

Eddie looked up and saw a tall boy, with deep brown curls that framed his face, and huge coke-bottle glasses. A bruise was forming on his right cheek, and a bit of blood stuck to the corner of his mouth. And Eddie thought he was beautiful.

"Hey," the boy said in an uncharacteristically soft tone. "Are you okay?" he reached his hand out to Eddie, and Eddie took it, letting the boy pull him up off the ground.

Eddie nodded, and their eyes met. His chocolate brown eyes pulled Eddie in, and the young boy could feel a bit of blush rising on his cheeks.

The older boy smiled down at him. "I'm Richie. What's your name?"

“Eddie.”

Richie smiled, a bit breathless from the fighting. “Cool.”

“Okay boys, stop making googly eyes at each other because we need to get the *hell* out of here.”

Eddie recognized the voice and looked behind Richie to see the boy with bright blue eyes. Bill. He saw Ben too, standing by the hood of the car.

Richie scoffed. “Okay, Big Bill, we’re going.” He looked at Eddie again and noticed the cut along his cheek. “*Fuck*, you’re bleeding.” He took Eddie’s face into his hands, tilting his head to the side to look at the cut closely. “How the hell did I not notice that before?”

Eddie swallowed back the pain. “It’s fine, I’m fine.”

The taller boy looked Eddie dead in the eyes. “No, you’re not.” Richie turned his head to look at Bill. “Hey, don’t you have those leftover medical supplies from the time Georgie fucked up his shin?”

Bill winced at the memory, still fresh in his mind. He had accidentally let Georgie go off and play by himself, and he found his little brother half an hour later with blood pooling out of his leg. He made Georgie swear not to tell their parents and bought a shit ton of supplies from the grocery store to stitch him up. Fuck, what a day.

“Yeah... I do,” Bill replied.

Richie smiled. “Perfect.” He looked towards Eddie. “Okay, so uh,” Richie licked his lips awkwardly, the taste of blood tainting his mouth. “So, we’ll take you to Bill’s house and get you all stitched up, okay?”

Eddie nodded. “Okay.”

Nodding at Ben and Bill, Richie placed his hand against the small of Eddie’s back, helping him to Ben’s car.

It was a beat-up piece of crap, but Ben was very grateful to have a car. None of his friends had one, so he became the designated driver

to and from school, which was fine with him. He loved his friends, no matter how fucking unbearable they were.

Gently placing Eddie in the backseat, Richie sat next to him during the drive. Ben drove and Bill sat in the passenger seat, blankly staring out of the window, shooting Richie a few glances here and there through the rearview mirror.

Richie nervously bounced his leg up and down, his hand resting protectively on Eddie's shoulder. He didn't know why he felt such a strong connection to the smaller boy, especially since they only met 10 minutes ago. But, he felt responsible for the well-being of him. Was that bad? Richie didn't care.

Eddie rested his head against the seat, trying not to hyperventilate from the pressure of Richie's hand. Yes, he should be more concerned with the teenage maniac who tried to torture him, but the only thing on his mind was *RICHIE RICHIE RICHIE*. He was a boy with a crush, helpless and infuriating. His stomach did hurt like hell though, tender to Eddie's touch. He winced when he laid his hand on the forming bruise.

Finally, they arrived at Ben's house. It was a normal suburban home, with white-washed walls and blue shutters. A bike was splayed out on the front lawn, the word "SILVER" etched into the side of it. Bill couldn't help but smile at the bike, once his, now Georgie's.

Richie opened the backseat door and helped Eddie out, taking him by the shoulder and holding him close to his chest. Their shoes crunched against the freshly-mowed grass as the four boys walked towards the front of the house. Bill ran a little bit ahead, inserting his key into the lock and opening the door very quietly.

They shuffled inside, voices low as they walked down to the basement. Bill flicked the light on, stairs squeaking as they all filed into the dimly-lit room. Shelves with random items lined the walls, and a thick coat of dust hung in the air. Christmas lights, Halloween decorations, baby clothes and old pieces of technology were strewn about the room too.

Bill immediately started looking for the medical supplies, while Ben

found an old lawn chair and placed it under the light. Richie helped Eddie sit down in the chair, Eddie grateful for the support he had been giving him.

“Thank you,” he whispered to Richie.

He just nodded and sat on the ground next to Eddie.

Ben strolled over to where Bill was going through an assortment of medical supplies. “Hey, do you see Trashmouth with that kid?” Ben whispered to Bill.

The taller boy nodded. “Yeah, he’s not being a *dick* for once in his life.”

“But, I mean... it’s more than that... Nah, whatever, I don’t know what I’m talking about.” He shook his head, smiling to himself.

“Here we are!” Bill said triumphantly, as he walked over to Eddie and Richie with the right supplies. He picked up a needle and some medical thread and positioned himself over Eddie’s cut. “Okay kid, this might hurt but don’t worry. Soon, you’ll be good as new.”

Eddie wanted to roll his eyes at his comment. It definitely *was* going to hurt, and he definitely *was* going to worry.

Richie looked at Eddie, quite frightened for him. He took Eddie’s hand into his and gripped it tightly. “Just squeeze my hand when it hurts, ‘kay?”

Blush spread through Eddie’s face again, embarrassed at how Richie’s actions affected him. “Okay,” he responded quietly.

Bill began to sew the cut, and Eddie gritted his teeth, squeezing Richie’s hand, and hard. Richie began to whisper into the younger boy’s ear, soft and sweet. The other boys couldn’t make out what he was saying, but they knew the words comforted Eddie and helped him through the pain. They even heard Eddie chuckle from one of Richie’s comments.

Finally, Bill cut the thread and examined his work, turning Eddie’s chin to look at it from all angles. He then took a bandage and placed

it over the stitches and stood up.

"There we go," Bill said, smiling down at his patient.

"Thank you," Eddie mumbled graciously.

Bill waved his hand nonchalantly. "Anytime, kid."

Eddie realized he was still holding Richie's hand, so he let go of it, blushing profusely. A string of curse words formed in Eddie's mind, jumbling around in his brain.

Richie looked lovingly at Eddie, having the sudden urge to kiss him, *here*, in this dirty-ass basement that secretly scared the shit out of him. He resisted it though. Instead, he patted Eddie's face and smiled.

"You're braver than you think Eds," Richie whispered to him.

Eddie smiled. "Don't call me that."

Notes for the Chapter:

aah i love that chapter.

the next one will come out in like five days, so stay tuned for that.

and i actually paced myself writing this chapter and didn't stay up until 3 in the morning to try and finish it.

i don't have any social media to give out because the birds work for the bourgeoisie.

stay cool fuckers!

3. my native optimism isn't broken by the light

Summary for the Chapter:

eddie bickers with richie, has some soft moments, and meets the rest of the club. richie flirts, of course.

Notes for the Chapter:

chapter title from the song "Pusher" by alt-J

okay so ignore the part where I said Bev and Richie were bf/gf, I decided to scratch that out. They are very affectionate though and they do make-out at least once (not in this chapter though). But Richie does get a girlfriend, probably some random chick (an ofc). Ben and Bev are bf/gf instead in hs, but Ben is totally cool with Bev and Rich being overly affectionate because he's not jealous.

anyway, i hope you guys enjoy this chapter. i wanted to get it out on friday, but i didn't have enough time to finish it up. buuuut enjoy!!

Eddie told the group of boys that he needed to get back to school, to retrieve his bike and ride it home. Richie was worried about this plan, arguing that it was safer for Ben to drop him off at his house. But, Eddie insisted that the older boys followed his plan. They didn't want to argue with him (because he tended to lash out like a rabid chihuahua when angered) so they agreed. Which led to the bickering of Richie and Eddie in the backseat of Ben's car.

"Okay, but you do understand that Henry will stop at *nothing* to corner you again, *right*?" Richie's voice came out a bit wobbly as the station wagon ran over a few bumps in the road.

It seemed the previously sunny sky became muted by a gray haze that blanketed the town of Derry. The weather in this town changed as easily as a hormonal teenager's mood. Eddie didn't like that. His mind was stagnant, a river that didn't flow anymore, and instead became murky as algae covered its surface. Yes, he came into this

world a curious, opinionated boy, but all of that changed when his father died. His mother became an abusive hypochondriac with undiagnosed Munchausen's syndrome and the villain in Eddie's story. The young boy was deprived of the childhood he deserved, of running through picturesque meadows and getting his knees dirty with the other kids. Of building sandcastles along the edge of the Atlantic Ocean and fighting imaginary wizards and trolls in the barrens.

Eddie's once sun-kissed face became pale and gaunt as the years went on, believing every word his mother told him. Such sweet lies his mother preached like gospel. And she whispered "*I'm so sorry Eddie Bear*" every time Sonia Kaspbrak backhanded her son across his face. For every tear the young boy shed, he despised himself a little bit more. He wished he could rise above his mother and say every little thought that had lingered in the back of his mind. But he couldn't. And he hated himself for that. It seemed to eat through him, the dark mass of insecure feelings that told him he would never be good enough for his mother, his peers, or himself. It kept him up every night, the cold realization that he would always be alone in this world.

"That bitch is one blood-thirsty *motherfucker* , and I know from experience. He used to bully me, you know. But I showed him who was boss sophomore year. I just fucking *decked* him one day in the halls, and he got knocked out, and *cold* . *Sure* , I got detention for a whole *shitty* month, but I honestly didn't give a flying fuck. 'Cause I, Richie *Trashmouth* Tozier, defeated that shit-sucking asswipe!" He pumped his fist, triumphantly, smiling obnoxiously at Eddie, who sat next to him.

The younger boy was staring out the window, not paying attention to Richie and his overly-exaggerated speech. He nervously picked at his bandage and wondered what the hell his mom would do when she saw it. She would fucking *freak* . He had to figure out a way to slip past her.

"Hey, fuck knuckles, you listening to me?"

Eddie looked away from the window to see Richie staring at him. He smirked. "Yeah, I was, and your story is full of *shit* . "

Richie gasped overdramatically and put a heavy southern drawl onto his pubescent voice. “ *Whatever* do you *mean* sugar, you know that I’ll always tell you the *truuuuth* .” He winked at the younger boy.

Eddie just scoffed and rolled his eyes, quiet admiration behind the gesture. “Well, I mean, how the hell could you have even knocked Henry Bowers out with *one punch* ?” He sat back in the seat, fidgeting his thumbs, eyes open wide in thought. “First of all, Bowers is like, two times your weight. You’re a fucking stick, no offense.”

Richie laughed humorlessly at his remark.

“And, second of all, your hand would fucking *break* with the force of a knock-out punch placed onto someone built stronger and heavier than you.” Eddie looked Richie in the eye. “It just doesn’t make sense... logically speaking.”

“Well, what the fuck do you know about punching someone?” Richie spat back, trying to gain some leverage in the conversation.

Eddie held up his hands defensively, giggling at the older boy’s tone. “I don’t know anything about... fighting, really. I’m just...,” he quietly smiled, “inferring.”

“Hmph. Inferring. Well, still sounds like bullshit to me Eduardo.” He whacked Eddie’s shoulder playfully, to which Eddie responded with knocking Richie’s glasses off his face.

“ *Hey* , no touching the glasses! You don’t want these puppies to break, right Eds? I don’t wanna go blind, or else I wouldn’t be able to see your pretty face.” He slapped Eddie’s leg and snorted.

The younger boy scowled so deeply, he looked about 30 years older. *He must’ve spent his whole life perfecting that*, Richie thought, smirking. Eddie crossed his arms and grimaced at the passing houses instead of hitting the older boy back.

The corners of Richie’s mouth turned upwards, and he tugged on Eddie’s shirt. “Hey, Eds, I’m sorry for smacking you.”

Eddie peeked at him out of the corner of his eye but didn’t say anything.

So, Richie placed his hand onto Eddie's face and made the younger boy face him. He didn't think about how intimate the gesture was until he was gazing deeply into Eddie's doe eyes. His long eyelashes seemed to rope him in like a lasso capturing a calf, and he was unable to turn away from Eddie's expression of what looked like... *longing? Hope?* He couldn't distinguish it.

"Okay, we're here," Ben called out from the front seat.

Richie quickly let go of Eddie's face and placed his hands back into his lap, interlocking them together, and realized they were quite sweaty. Eddie stayed grounded, facing Richie for a few moments more, then opened the creaky car door and shuffled out.

He acknowledged Ben and Bill with a nod, then looked at Richie, shooting him a quick smile. "Thank you," he whispered.

The older boy opened his mouth to speak, but nothing came out. That made Eddie grin, huge and wide, teeth pearly in the sunset's light, which had broken through Derry's haze. It made his face look softer, taking away his growing worry lines. He made sure not to slam the door, and walked up to the bike rack, wondering how he was there at the high school, just an hour ago. Shaking his head, he unlocked his bike and fell back into the easy routine of letting it lead the way home. He didn't notice Richie's eyes as he drove away in Ben's car from the high school, mind muddled from the previous interaction.

I don't think Richie would be able to verbally comprehend what was running through his mind at that moment. If someone asked him, I think the only word that would escape his lips would be "*Eddie*". The name, soft in his mouth, shimmering in the back of his head, ecstasy on the tip of his tongue. Whenever the older boy thought of him, he was lit on fire, from the top of his skull to the tips of his toes. Just burning bright with the thought of Eddie, while others would pass him by like usual, not knowing how much this *boy* was in *love* . You could strip away Richie's laughter and humor, his sparkling eyes, his vibrant clothes, *every part of his soul* , but one thing would always remain.

Eddie.

It seemed like a higher power was in a good mood as the clouds parted to reveal a gorgeous sunset, dazzling Derry in bright oranges, pinks and purples. These colors faded to a luxurious midnight blue, spread across the sky like dark velvet, dotted with a million, *no* , a *billion* twinkling stars.

Eddie admired every one of them from the kitchen window, as he was seated at the table eating a hearty frozen pizza dinner. His mother had left a note on the table saying how she had an emergency work meeting and would be back early Sunday morning. His eyes had bugged out of his head reading the letter, immensely surprised by the trust his mother had put into him. Almost a whole weekend with no parental supervision to any normal teenager was a cause for a riot. But, not Eddie. He planned to spend the weekend inside the house, feeling safe in his own home for the first time. It was like a weight was lifted off his shoulders when Eddie breathed in the cool night air, exhaling evenly without any fear.

He finished his dinner, scrubbing the plate clean and placing it into the dishwasher. Then, he walked up the stairs, creaking with each step, and flopped onto his bed with a grunt. Sleep hung heavily around his eyes, blurring his vision as he tried to change into a set of pajamas. They were long-sleeved and white, with little red polka dots, hand-picked by his mother. Stupid and meant for a small child. But it was all Eddie had clean. So, he tugged them on, and laid in the bed, his mind slowly shutting down from exhaustion.

The last thought on his mind was Richie that night, curled up in his down cover, breath quiet on his pillow. The moon seemed to watch over the boy that night like the father he never had. Watching for any danger, scaring off monsters hidden in the shadows. And as the sun came up for another day, the moon slipped behind the Derry skyline, leaving Eddie to the morning's harsh truths. But, it would always come back. Eddie found comfort in the fact that the passing of time was something that would never change. What it would bring, though, was his biggest fear of all.

He pulled out the stitches on Saturday night, wincing with every jerk of his hand. A bit of blood leaked out from the wound, but Eddie scrubbed it off with anti-bacterial wipes he had sitting on his desk. Whenever he felt anxious or worked up, he would rip one of those bad boys from the carton and begin scouring his room, cleaning every surface he could. His desk, nightstand, chair, bed frame, even the action figures sitting atop his shelves. He would scrub and scrub until every item he owned was stripped of its luster and shine. Knowing that everything was clean secured Eddie in a way nothing else did.

His mom was coming home the next day, and Eddie knew she would go totally ballistic and jump off the deep end when she saw the cut. So, he stuck a band-aid to the wound and studied it in the mirror, adjusting it to make sure it covered the entirety of the cut. He would say that he was using scissors on a school project when his hand accidentally slipped and lacerated his cheek. *Totally believable.*

And that's just what he did when Sunday morning came. Sonia babied and scolded him for being so careless while using scissors, and Eddie nodded earnestly to every word she spoke. He promised not to use scissors while outside of her watch and guidance. His mom accepted his vow and went to sit down in her chair to catch up on all the shows she missed, while Eddie jaunted to his room to complete a bit of homework. Just another Sunday morning for the Kaspbraks.

Henry Bowers was nowhere to be found in Derry Highschool on Monday, and that was just fine with Eddie. He strolled through the halls, his head up a bit higher than the week before, despite the cut on his cheek. People picked up on his newfound confidence and started nodding at him in the halls. It was a small thing, but Eddie was aglow with determination by the time it became lunch. He definitely didn't forget the lunch invite from Mike, and so he headed towards the football field, a skip in his step. His feet crunched against the freshly cut lawn, smelling a bit like manure. The sun decided to be docile today and shone softly on the quiet town of Derry.

Eddie rounded the corner of the bleachers and walked in front of a group of teenagers. There were six in total, and they sat in a semi-

circle behind the stands. All of them lounged and leaned against each other like they were refugees hiding from the hostile world outside. A world that wouldn't accept them for all their quirks and secrets they kept buried deep inside. So, as a result, they found solace in each other, knowing that they were accepted in the group. And they were.

"Eddie! You made it!" A voice called out from the clump of kids. It was Mike Hanlon, a big smile plastered on, seeming too big for his face. He waved the younger boy over, gesturing for him to sit down, and he did. Eddie crossed his legs and looked to Mike expectantly. At that moment, he noticed that Mike's fingers were intertwined with another boy's. *Okay.*

"So, guys, this is Eddie Kaspbrak. He's in my math class, and he's a *freshman*. He's super fuckin' smart. Probably smarter than any of you."

A puff of smoke blew into Mike's face, and he coughed and waved it away, clearly annoyed by the smoker's antics. A laugh bubbled up from the person who blew the smoke, and Eddie recognized it immediately.

"I already *know* this dumbass, Micycle. I met him on Friday." It was Richie, smirking at Eddie with a knowing look on his face. What he knew about, Eddie didn't understand. He held a dimly lit cigarette between his fingers, his huge-ass glasses taking up most of his face. A garish, brightly-colored green patterned shirt hung down his lanky frame. He was resting between the legs of a girl with fiery red hair and a permanent smirk. She was also smoking a cigarette and turned her head to blow it to the side.

"I k-know him too. I actually p-p-put on the part of doctor and stitched up that s-scar of his." Eddie looked towards the blue-eyed boy. Bill, he remembered. He hadn't noticed that stutter before.

"Me too. I was there with Rich and Bill when Henry fuckin' Bowers cornered him. We roughed up his gang a bit and helped Eddie get back on his feet." This was Ben, whose hand was wrapped around the redhead's waist.

"Well, that's great... That you know him, not that Eddie got beat up."

Mike cleared his throat and began to speak again, eyes flitting across the group. "Um, Eddie, this is Beverly," he gestured towards the girl, "and this is Stan. My boyfriend." He squeezed Stan's hand, giving him a quiet smile.

Being the gentleman that Stan was, he reached out his hand and shook Eddie's. "Pleasure to meet you."

Eddie nodded. Stan had thick curly hair and analytical eyes, and he maintained a sort of poise that Eddie couldn't place.

Beverly tilted his head towards the younger boy. "I like your fanny pack."

Eddie glanced down to what he was wearing, forgetting he had it on. "T-thank you."

Richie groaned. "Fuck Eds, how much of a dweeb *are* you?" He breathed out a cloud of smoke directed towards Eddie, who began to immediately hack at the intake of smoke into his lungs. Thankfully, he didn't have to use his inhaler.

Between coughing, he said, "Don't call me that."

The older boy just chuckled and laid back deeper into Beverly. Eddie noticed that Ben didn't care when Beverly ran her fingers through Richie's dark curls. Must not be the jealous type. But, Eddie couldn't help himself envying Beverly's position, wishing that Richie would lay between his legs so Eddie could rake his fingers through his hair. So he could turn Richie's head slightly and kiss him softly on the lips, letting his fingers trail down his shirt. Then Richie would turn around and grip Eddie's hips with an amused kind of ferocity, and Eddie would let out the softest moan with the sudden roughness. He imagined the kisses that would trail down his jaw and neck, the hands undoing his belt and -

Eddie cleared his throat and nervously crossed his arms, trying hard not to get a fucking boner from his thoughts. He shouldn't even think about Richie this way, he realized, but he couldn't help it. He wanted so badly to be in Richie's arms, to laugh with him in the depths of the dark at his stupid jokes and to... to have sex with him in his bedroom

when Eddie's mom was gone. To hold his hand during lunch and to whisper in his ear about how beautiful and amazing he is. He wanted it all. *FUCK*. "Stop picking on Eddie, you dickhead," Ben said, smiling slightly.

"Shut up Haystack. I'm only teasing him because I know he likes it," Richie said, winking at Eddie. Fuck, he was smooth.

The younger boy's cheek turned a slight shade of pink, which Beverly immediately noticed. "So... Eddie. Do you have a girlfriend? Or... maybe a boyfriend?" She said, inhaling her cigarette once more.

Eddie made a strangled kind of noise, looking like a deer caught in the headlights. "Uh... um - I, no I don't. No, definitely not." He chuckled slightly, trying to play off his stuttering.

Richie almost choked on his cigarette when Beverly asked that, caught off guard by her question. Bev laughed at his reaction, pulling his hair a bit.

"Eddie's too cute to commit to anyone. Every girl he meets probably falls in love with him just by looking into his eyes." Richie smirked at the younger boy, who looked at Richie almost innocently like he was trying to convey that no girl had ever fallen in love with him.

Bill then tried to steer the conversation away from the clear flirting Richie was attempting with Eddie. "So, Eddie, y-y-you were pr-pretty fast running away f-f-f-from Bowers on F-Friday. B-b-before you ran yourself i-into that alley. You could probably m-make the t-t-track team if y-you wanted to. "

Eddie smiled sadly. "My mom would never let me join the track team. She says I'm too... delicate."

Gasping suddenly, Richie scowled at the comment. "You're not delicate at all, Eds. You looked pretty strong to me when you were fuckin' sprinting away from Bowers. You were as fast as the shitting wind for fuck's sake. You could be the fucking team captain if you wanted to asswipe."

"Thanks, Rich. But how many fucking times do I have to tell you,

don't call me Eds ."

The older boy chuckled and leaned away from Beverly to pinch Eddie's cheeks. "Okay, Eddie Bear."

Eddie grimaced. "Ew, my mom calls me that."

"Does she now? That's not what she told me when I was fucking her last night."

"Fuck off, Trasmouth."

A few *oooooh*'s erupted from the crowd.

"Damn Eddie, I didn't know you had a foul mouth too," Ben remarked.

Glaring at Richie, Eddie responded curtly. "Trashmouth over here seems to bring it out in me."

"I know what else I can bring out in you, Kaspbrak." Richie then made a few promiscuous noises, letting out a deep moan and slapping his hand against the pavement.

Eddie's cheeks turned bright red and he turned away from Richie. "*Fuck off, Rich.*"

Richie responded in a low voice, almost growling. "Never."

Stan rolled his eyes at the whole affair but was laughing deep inside at Richie and Eddie's conversation. He knew that Richie liked Eddie, by the way his body was leaning towards Eddie and the way his eyes always seemed to land on the younger boy's face. Stan knew the Trashmouth very well, almost since preschool. He didn't remember a single day where they didn't interact in any way, whether it was in real life or over text. Stanley was concerned that Richie was going to get his heartbroken, but he knew that Richie needed to make his own mistakes when it came to these things. It was for the best.

"Oh, I almost forgot," Bev said, sitting up a bit, Richie squirming. "Brandon Sharp is having a party on Friday night because his parents are out of town. He invited me and said to bring whoever, as long as

we brought alcohol. Which I promised him we could get.” She looked across the group. They all responded with ‘*sounds fun*’ and nods and ‘*hells yeah!*’. The ‘*hells yeah!*’ came from Richie, if we’re talking specifically.

Richie looked towards Eddie expectantly, who hadn’t given any sign of confirmation yet. “You going too, Eduardo?”

“Yeah... uh, I’ll try to sneak out after my mom goes to sleep.”

The older boy whistled. “Dang, little Eddie Kaspbrak, sneaking out of the house after dark to go to a high school party. That’s *pretty* attractive.”

Eddie whacked him on the foot, making Richie giggle.

Beverly smiled at the little interaction between them. *They would be so cute together*, she thought. *Too bad Eddie is 15 and Richie is 18. That would never work.*

The faint echo of the high school bell rung across the football field, reaching the ears of the kids sitting under the bleachers.

“Fuckin’ hell man. I guess it’s time to get back to the grind,” Richie remarked, pulling Beverly off of the ground.

Mike and Stan held hands as the group walked across the grass. Ben’s hand was still around Beverly’s waist, and Richie had his arm slung around Eddie’s shoulders. Bill fiddled with his hands as he walked alongside Ben.

They were an odd group, walking through the halls of the high school. But no one could deny the chemistry they all had, laughing and making fun of each other, holding each other close.

Eventually, their paths diverged, and they all walked in different directions to get to their classes. But they were still a unit, a tight-knit group of close friends whose bonds couldn’t be broken by fighting and bickering, or even time. They loved each other, some more than others in more complicated ways. Even as a few of them moved away, getting as far away from Derry as they could, they kept the good parts of their childhood. Remembering the times under the

bleachers and the weekends spent at one of their houses. Remembering the small smiles and the wheezing laughter, and the quiet tears that would come once in a while.

Derry would always be apart of them, the good parts more than the bad. And that was just fine with them.

Notes for the Chapter:

the next chapter will probably come out next sunday, the 15th of december. it'll probably be another hs chapter, revolving around the party. or maybe not, maybe i'll change my mind. i'm a fickle and indecisive person in need of some great character development.

have an awesome rest of your week. soon it'll be break so keep going!!

stay cool fuckers!

Author's Note:

also don't be afraid to comment or leave kudos, it makes my whole day.

i love you guys so much thank you for the support!!